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ABSTRACT

The relationships between teachers' attitudes toward responsibility and locus of control and other characteristics such as stress, educational attitudes, and attitudes toward change were studied in 54 (35 female and 19 male) experienced primary and secondary school teachers taking a course on classroom-based research. Attitude toward responsibility and locus of control were determined with instruments adapted for this purpose. Teacher stress was measured by an adapted version of the Wilson Stress Profile for Teachers, and educational attitude and attitude toward change were measured by scales previously developed. Responsibility correlated with teacher stress in the predicted direction, and there were significant correlations with educational attitude and attitude toward change. Correlations between locus of control and the criterion measures were not as high as expected. Teacher locus of control was thus a weaker predictor of the criterion measures than was responsibility. These constructs of responsibility and perceived teacher efficacy showed concurrent and convergent validity through the configuration of correlations of the attitude measures. Two tables present study data, and two appendices contain the Responsibility and Teacher Locus of Control Scales. (SLD)

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PREFACE

This is a report on work done with two instruments, ie. the development and validation of the Attitude Towards Responsibility measure and the adaptation and validation of the instrument on Teacher Locus of Control. This work is most timely, coming as it does at a time when we are looking for new locally-devised measures for ERU's projects on RITE (Research in Teacher Education). In particular, as in the former ASI (Additional Selection Instruments) Project and now in the IE Selection Criteria (ITO1) Project, we would like to have instruments that have the ability to predict with some degree of success the teaching effectiveness of trainees in the training programme itself as well as in full-responsibility positions (as full-fledged teachers). From the results reported by Dr Soh Kay Cheng in this paper, these two instruments appear very promising in terms of construct validity, reliability, and (in a practical situation) credibility.

Further research with these two instruments seems desirable, using fresh batches of applicants to our pre-service programmes. We therefore plan to use the two instruments in the ITO1 project shortly. As most teacher education institutions in the US have yet to use (much less construct) specific measures (for selection purposes, see the table below) of the non-academic factors that can predict teaching success reasonably well, this attempt by Dr Soh should be regarded as an important contribution to ERU's research programme.

A Comparison of Criteria, by Percentage, Used to Admit Students to Teacher Education, 1982 and 1972 (US)

Criteria	1982 Yes	1982 No	1982 Other	1972 Yes	1972 No	1972 No Response
Pre-admission interview	41.3	54.5	4.1	40.0	46.1	13.9
Formal application	91.7	8.3	0	91.1	7.8	1.1
Physical examination	19.0	73.6	7.4	41.1	54.4	4.4
Psychological examination	6.6	89.3	4.1	12.8	83.8	3.3
Speech test	48.8	51.2	0	46.6	51.6	1.6
Written language test[a]	38.0	54.5	7.4			
Standardized tests	41.3	55.4	3.3	17.2	79.4	3.3

[a]The 1972 study used the term "professional tests" which included both written tests and standardized tests. The 1982 study used two classifications: written language test and standardized tests.

Source : Lamen & Reeves (1983)

27 March 1988

Ho Wah Kam
Head/ERU

Introduction

The search for predictors of teacher effectiveness has a long history, though as a field of research it has not been rewarding. The monumental work of Ryans (1958) is a landmark of research effort in establishing a 'teacher personality'. Renewed interest in teacher selection research took place in the late seventies (Schalock, 1979) and an intense concern for teacher selection was triggered off a decade later by the Holmes Group (1986).

The disappointing results of studies on teacher effectiveness up to the end of the last decade is pathetically summarized by Schalock (1979:407) after a lengthy and comprehensive review of the pertinent literature, thus:

> "Perhaps the most striking conclusion reached from the review is that reseasrch on teacher effectiveness has little to contribute to decisions about who should enter the teaching profession."

In a more recent though somewhat limited review, Levis (1985:5020) reflects with an equally pessimistic tone the view expressed by Getzels and Jackson (1963) that "very little is known for certain about the relation between teacher personality and teacher effectiveness. Research studies carried out since the early 1960s do not provide evidence for a more optimistic view."

These conclusions, disheartening though they may be, need not mean a call for a moratorium, as new, young teachers are always needed by the schools for replacement and expansion purposes. The search for predictors that will assist teacher selection has to continue.

Teacher education institutions have traditionally, and with good reason, relied very much though not entirely, on academic qualifications as a criterion for deciding on who should get admitted and there is a trend for this criterion to become more stringent (Laman & Reeves, 1983). These authors have also brought to light, at least on the American scene, a trend of using more frequently standardized tests of language skills and mathematics and less frequently psychological tests. Such a trend need not be taken as showing that academic qualifications and skills are more predictive of teacher effectiveness, as little if any evidence has been forthcoming. On the other hand, the possibility that teacher personality and attitudes predict teacher effectiveness should not be dismissed for such reasons. In this regard, Smith (1973:8) has this to say:

> "There can be no doubt that personality in the attitudinal sense is a factor in teaching behaviour. The question is what elements of personality make a difference in such behaviour, and how those elements can be modified in directions that increased pupil growth."

A whole host of personality and attitudinal measures have been tried in one study or another on teacher effectiveness; the more well-known ones are the Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory (MTAI), the Sixteen Personality Factor Questionnaire (16PF), the Allport-Vernon-Lindsay Study of Values, the Authoritarianism Scale and even projective measures such as the Thematic Apperception Test and the Rorschach (Levis, 1985). The unfruitfulness of studies using these and similar measures could be due to the fact that they are general, though fundamental and therefore pervasive in personality structure. Since these measures are supposedly context-free, they tend to be remote from the school and classroom. Thus, it appears that measures which have more direct reference to the school and classroom context and the worklife of teachers may prove to be more promising in predicting teacher effectiveness (the assessment of which is another knotty conceptual and measurement problem).

In recent years, a growing number of studies show that teachers' sense of efficacy is a powerful predictor of teacher effectiveness. The construct of teacher locus of control or perceived teacher efficacy is defined as the teachers' beliefs or conviction that they can influence how well students learn and how they behave (Guskey, 1981; Rose & Medway, 1981; Taylor et al., 1981). It has also been found that teachers who place a high value on teaching tend to take greater personal responsibility for their own actions and their students' performance (Ames, 1982; Brookover & Lezotte, 1979). The concept of personal responsibility for student performance and behaviour may be extended to include responsibility for other aspects of school work and to attitude towards responsibility in general within the school context.

Against this background, it is the intent of the present study to explore further the relationships between teachers' attitude towards responsibility and locus of control, on the one hand, and other teacher characteristics such as stress, educational attitudes and attitude towards change, on the other hand, as the latter variables might have a bearing on teacher behaviour and hence teacher effectiveness.

METHOD

Subjects

Involved in this study were 54 experienced teachers who participated in a course on classroom-based research. They either were nominated by their respective school principals or volunteered to participate. As shown in Table 1, there was a preponderance of female primary teachers. That these teachers had long years of teaching experience is indicated by the mean of 19.98, and the S.D. of 8.48 suggests that they had a wide range of years of service.

Predictor Measures

The two predictors are teachers' **attitude towards responsibility** and **locus of control**. Their measurements are described below. The scales are in Appendix A.

Responsiblity. This scale consists of 14 Likert-type items purportedly measuring teachers' sense of responsibility, willingness to take on additional, new duties, and their perception of being assigned additional duties. Half of the 14 items are positively worded and the others negatively. Two sample items are:

3. I accept responsibility because it gives me a chance to contribute.

7. I will do my job, but I do not like additional responsibility.

As reported (Soh,1985), when administered to a group of primary and secondary teachers, items of this scale discriminated between high- and low-scoring teachers with a median of point-biserial correlation of 0.41. A Cronbach's alpha of 0.79 was obtained when the scale was first constructed. The correlations of this scale with measures of educational attitude (0.35), teacher locus of control (0.31), attitude towards change (0.28) and Machiavellianism (-0.29) suggest its concurrent validity.

Teacher Locus of Control. This scale consists of 20 Likert-type items for measuring teachers' beliefs in their own potential in influencing student performance and classroom events (Taylor, Sadowski, & Peacher, 1981). Evidence of its reliability and validity was reported by Sadowski et al. (1982) and Sadowski & Woodward (1983). Soh (1986a) reported the internal consistency reliabilities of this scale when used with three groups of teachers to vary from 0.55 to 0.72 and its concurrent validity is suggested by the correlations with educational attitude (0.28), attitude towards change (0.32), attitude towards responsibility

(0.31) and teaching behaviours (0.23). Teacher locus of control has also been found to be a moderator of teacher stress (Soh, 1986b), consistent with findings of studies involving other human services.

Half of the 20 items of this scale are positively worded and the other half have negative wording. Two sample items are shown herewith:

3. It is impossible to raise the current academic standards of my students.

7. When I can spend extra time with a slow learner, I soon see positive results.

Criterion Measures

The three criterion measures of this study were teacher stress, educational attitude, and attitude towards change. These are described below.

Teacher Stress This was measured by an adapted version of the Wilson Stress Profile for Teacher (Wilson, in Truch, 1981). The 20 items of this scale deal with various possible sources of teacher stress, including student behaviour, relationship with the school administration, relationship with fellow-teachers, intrapersonal conflicts, and psychophysiological symptoms. For the scale as a whole, a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85 was found for a group of experienced teachers (Soh, 1987). Its concurrent validity was suggested by the negative correlations with attitudes toward responsibility and change.

Educational Attitude This 20-item scale deals with various aspects of a teacher's school life, namely, children, discipline, teaching methods, and administration. High scores on the scale indicate more 'progressive', people-oriented attitudes. Earlier studies since 1971 show the scale to have reliabilities ranging from 0.36 to 0.79, and a recent study returns with reliabilities varying from 0.70 to 0.80. The validity of the scale is indicated by its expected correlations with teacher locus of control, attitudes towards responsibility and change as well as teaching behaviour (Soh, 1986c).

Change This was measured by a scale comprising 20 Likert-type items purportedly dealing with teachers' acceptance of changes in life as normal happenings and feelings toward change as eariching life experience. The sca'e has an internal consistency reliability of 0.79 and its concurrent validity is suggested by its correlations with educational attitude, teacher locus of control and attitude towards responsibility in the expected direction (Soh, 1985).

RESULTS

First of all, it is worthy of note that years of teaching experience did not correlate significantly with Responsibility and Teacher Locus of Control. In other words, the two predictors were independent of length of service.

Next, it is necessary to look at the reliabilities of the various measures before their relationships. As shown in Table 2, **Teacher Stress** has a reliability of 0.93 for the scale as a whole and the reliabilities of the subscales thereof vary from 0.32 (Intrapersonal) to 0.94 (Administration), the median being 0.70. As for **Educational Attitude**, the scale as a whole has a reliability of 0.79 and subscale reliabilities vary from 0.59 (Children) to 0.82 (Administration), with a median of 0.69. The **Change** scale also has an impressive reliability of 0.78. Thus, it may be safe to say that the reliabilities of the criterion measures are reasonably assured.

As regarding the reliabilities of the two predictor measures, **Responsibility** has a Cronbach's alpha of 0.85 and **Teacher Locus of Control** one of 0.63. While the former is rather encouraging for a 14-item scale, the latter is somewhat short of expectation, though still respectable.

As shown in Table 2, **Responsibility** correlated with **Teacher Stress** in the predicted direction both at the subscale and whole scale levels, though the correlations are not high, varying from -0.27 to -0.33 ($p < 0.05$, one-tailed test). The median of the correlations for the subscales is -0.31. An exception is **Fellow-Teachers** for which the correlation is not significant. **Responsibility** has also significant correlations with **Educational Attitude** both at the subscale and whole scale levels. The correlations are in the expected, positive direction and vary from 0.23 to 0.45. The median of correlations for the subscales is 0.33. In addition, **Responsibility** has a correlation of .30 with **Change** and one of 0.46 with **Teacher Locus of Control**.

The correlations between **Teacher Locus of Control** as a predictor with the criterion measures fall short of expectation somehow. Although an earlier study (Soh, 1986) shows it to be a moderator of teacher stress as indicated by the negative correlation, there are only two significant,negative correlations, -0.28 for **Student Behaviour** and -0.27 for **Intrapersonal**. Likewise, the correlations between **Teacher Locus of Control** and **Educational Attitude**, are not significant, though in the predicted direction in most cases. However, **Teacher Locus of Control** correlated significantly with **Change** (0.25) and **responsibility** (0.46). Thus, **Teacher Locus of Control** when compared with **Responsibility** seems a weaker predictor of the criterion measures.

DISCUSSION

Notwithstanding the limitations of the study in terms of the size and composition of the sample, the patterns of correlations between the predictors and the criteria indicate convergent validities of the former, especially **Responsibility**. The values of the two predictor measures are added by the substantial reliabilities, high in some cases.

Since the subjects formed a highly selected group in that they had either volunteered themselves or were nominated by school principals to participate in a research workshop, homogeneity in the various measures under study can be expected. This suggests that the variances of the measures might have been truncated due to self-selection or nomination, and the correlations between the predictors and criteria would be higher had it been possible to involve a more representative sample of teachers. It can also be speculated that the correlations would be even higher were applicants for teacher education programmes to be involved, since becoming a teacher entails selection for admission which can be expected to truncate the variances of personality and attitudinal measures.

However, the items of the **Responsibility** and **Teacher Locus of Control** scales were couched in school and classroom terms for research on teachers who are already in school. The context of the items may not be suitable for selection purposes. This is to say that the scales will have to be re-contextualized if they were to be considered for use in connection with selection for admission to teacher education programme.

An attempt has been made to re-contextualize the two predictor scales. This was achieved by replacing first person reference ("I") with third person reference ("the teacher" or "teachers") and some necessary grammatical and syntactical adjustments, while retaining the content of the items. In doing this, the construct of attitude towards responsibility and that of perceived teacher efficacy were maintained but gauged in a different and less personal context. Admittedly, this might have changed the nature of the scales from self-reports to evaluative opinions with an element of projection. The modified items are in Appendix B.

If these two scales were to be used for selection purposes, the question of faking will arise. Faking is a common problem of attitudinal measurement and interviewing under potentially threatening conditions (such as selection) when the subjects find themselves at risk for some reasons. It is therefore a rationalization that the **Responsibility** and **Teacher Locus of Control** scales, when modified for selection use, will be as effective or as poor as other attitudinal scales and interview schedules as far as faking is concerned.

In conclusion, the constructs of responsibility and perceived teacher efficacy as studied here have shown concurrent and convergent validity through the configuration of correlations of various attitudinal measures. The next logical step is to evaluate their predictive validities with teaching behaviour as the criterion.

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Table 1 The Subjects

	Primary	Secondary	Total
Male	17	2	19
Female	30	5	35
Total	47	7	54

Table 2 Reliaabilities and Correlations

Measures	Reliabilities (Cronbach's alphas)	Correlations Attitude toward Responsibility	Correlations Locus of Control
Experience (Years)	-	.10	.22
Teacher Stress			
Student Behaviour	.46*	-.31*	-.28*
Administration	.94*	-.31*	-.15
Fellow-teachers	.90*	-.21	-.03
Intrapersonal	.32*	-.29*	-.27*
Psychophysiological	.70*	-.27*	-.15
Total Stress	.93*	-.33*	-.19
Educational Attitudes			
Children	.59*	.32*	.11
Discipline	.65*	.33*	.17
Methods	.72*	.23*	.14
Administration	.82*	.39*	-.02
Total Attitude	.79*	.45*	.15
Attitude towards Change	.78*	.30*	.25*
Attitude towards Responsibility	.85*	-	.46*
Locus of Control	.63*	.46*	-

* $p < .05$ (one-tailed test)

Appendix A : Responsibility and Teacher Locus of Control Scales

Responsibility Scale

You find below some statements about responsibility. Some are true to you and others are not. Please indicate your evaluation of each statement by entering one of the five grades.

5 True all the time
4 True most of the time
3 True some of the time
2 Not true most of the time
1 Not true all the time

( ) 1. I will accept a responsibility as a privilege.

( ) 2. I will not accept additional responsibility if it is beyond my normal duties.

( ) 3. I accept responsibility becasue it give me a chance to contribute.

( ) 4. I do not volunteer to do more than my share of work.

( ) 5. I feel bullied when asked to be responsibility for somethings.

( ) 6. I am willing to take on more responsibility than others.

( ) 7. I will do my job, but I do not like additional responsibility.

( ) 8. I feel useful when I am assigned more responsibilities.

( ) 9. I cannot handle more responsibilities as this will deprive me of other activities.

( ) 10. As long as I can cope, I will accept additional responsibility.

( ) 11. Being made responsible gives me a sense of worth.

( ) 12. My main interest is to get over with a job.

( ) 13. When given a task, I strive to do my best.

( ) 14. I avoid offering to take or accept additional responsibility.

Teacher Locus of Control Scale

Below are a number of statements about teachers and teaching. There are no right or wrong answers. Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement by giving a grade which reflects your opinion. Please read each item carefully and indicate the response which most closely corresponds to the way you personally feel.

Grade:
- 5 if you strongly agree
- 4 if you agree somewhat
- 3 if you are undecided
- 2 if you disagree somewhat
- 1 if you disagree strongly

( ) 1. Once a child gets headed the wrong direction, it is <u>not</u> up to me to straighten him out.

( ) 2. If the majority of my class does poorly on a test, the poor grades are generally becasue I did not teach the related concepts well.

( ) 3. It is impossible to raise the current academic standards of my students.

( ) 4. I believe I can help each student in my class to experience success and self-worth in some area.

( ) 5. Some personalities just naturally clash and there is no way a particular student and teacher can get along.

( ) 6. It seems as if absolutely nothing can be done about having to use physical punishment on students.

( ) 7. When I can spend extra time with a slow learner, I soon see positive results.

( ) 8. A teacher has a great amount of influence on the personality and attitudes of students.

( ) 9. There will always be classroom fights among students regardless of how hard teachers try to prevent them.

( ) 10. My students who seem overly passive undergo drastic personality changes when a teacher designs an activity which challenges them.

( ) 11. On days when my class is calm, I know the calmness has <u>nothing</u> to do with my influence.

( ) 12. If a child is being teased a lot, I can often think of something to do to get the teasing to stop.

( ) 13. I don't feel there is much a teacher can do to improve the examination results.

( ) 14. I often see a child who is a pawn and there is nothing I can do to help.

( ) 15. A child's behaviour problem can be adequately modified providing the teacher finds the correct solution.

( ) 16. I feel like I cannot accomplish anything in the teaching profession.

( ) 17. Realistically, a teacher can invest time in a particular student to the point, at which time further instruction is not productive.

( ) 18. If I study the situation hard enough, there are few classroom problems I cannot solve.

( ) 19. If a student comes to me in time, I can help with almost any problem.

( ) 20. If I consistently use appropriate techniques, even the most difficult behaviour problem can be managed.

Appendix B: Modified Items of Responsibility and Teacher Locus of Control Scales

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Teachers and Teaching Scale

You will find in this booklet a number of statements about teachers and teaching. We would like you to give us your frank opinions about the statements. You may agree or disagree with these statements to different degrees, but what you really feel is most important.

Please indicate for each statement how strongly you agree or disagree by entering one of the following codes in the answer sheet provided:

6 Agree strongly

5 Agree moderately

4 Agree a little

3 Disagree a little

2 Disagree moderately

1 Disagree strongly

ENTER YOUR CHOICES IN THE ANSWER SHEET.

ENTER YOUR CHOICES IN THE ANSWER SHEET

6	Agree strongly	3	Disagree a little
5	Agree moderately	2	Disagree moderately
4	Agree a little	1	Disagree strongly

==========

1. Once a student gets headed the wrong direction, it is NOT up to the teacher to straighten him out.

2. If the majority of a class does poorly on a test, the poor grades are generally because the teacher did not teach the related concepts well.

3. It is impossible to raise the current academic students in the school.

4. A teacher can help each student in his class to experience success and self-worth in some areas.

5. Some personalities just naturally clash and there is no way a particular student and teacher can get along.

6. It seems as if absolutely nothing can be done about having to use physical punishment on students.

7. When a teacher can spend extra time with a slow learner, he soon sees positive results.

8. A teacher has a great amount of influence on the personality and attitudes of students.

9. There will always be classroom fights among students regardless of how hard teachers try to prevent them.

10. Many students who seem overly passive undergo drastic personality changes when a teacher designs an activity which challenges them.

11. On days when a class is calm, the calmness has nothing to do with the teacher's influence.

12. If a student is being teased a lot, a teacher can always think of something to do to get the teasing to stop.

13. There is not much a teacher can do to improve the examination results of students.

14. Teachers often see students who are pawns and there is nothing the teachers can do to help.

15. A student's behaviour problems can be adequately modified providing the teacher finds the correct solution.

16. Teachers do not seem to be able to accomplish anything in the teaching profession.

17. Realistically, a teacher can invest time in a particular student to the point, at which time further instruction is not productive.

18. If a teacher studies the situation hard enough, there are few classroom problems he cannot solve.

19. A teacher can help with almost any problem if the student goes to him in time.

20. If a teacher consistently uses appropriate techniques, even the most difficult behaviour problems can be managed.

21. Teachers accept responsibility as a privilege.

22. Teachers will not accept an additional responsibility if it is beyond their normal duties.

23. Teachers accept responsibilities because they give them a chance to contribute.

24. Teachers do not volunteer to do more than their share of work.

25. Teachers feel bullied when asked to be responsible for something.

26. Teachers are willing to take on more responsibility than others.

27. Teachers will do their work, but they do not like additional responsibilities.

28. Teachers feel useful when assigned more responsibilities.

29. Teachers cannot handle more responsibilities as this will deprive them of other activities.

30. As long as they can cope, teachers will accept additional responsibilities.

31. Being made responsible gives teacehrs a sense of worth.

32. Teachers' main interest is to get the job done and not to be bothered by it.

33. When given a task, teachers strive to do their best.

34. Teachers avoid offering to take or accept additional responsibility.